



FEMA

STRENGTHENING DISASTER RECOVERY FOR THE NATION



Strengthening Disaster Recovery for the Nation

VIDEO TELECONFERENCE (VTC)

Region IV

Time: October 22, 2009, Thursday, 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM (Eastern)

Participating Locations: FEMA Region IV, Alabama,
Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi,
North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee

Participation Via: VTCs, phone bridge (only) and participating through WebEx

Sectors Represented: Federal and State agencies, nonprofits and private sector and Tribal representation

Note: This product is provided as a general summary only, not a transcript of the discussion.

Region IV VTC Summary

Atlanta, Georgia
October 22, 2009

Region IV addressed questions through Group discussion. Facilitators asked for volunteers from different backgrounds to provide the first response to start the conversation. All questions were addressed.

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

NOTE: Responses are by questions **posed** and are noted using the original sequencing.

Q1: How would you define a successful disaster recovery?

- Participants feel the goal is to achieve long-term recoveries and that successful recoveries result in:
 - “Making the State as **whole as possible**” as **quickly** as possible. “Speed is the key.” Participants acknowledged that speed is determined, in part, by the extent of damages that occur.
 - A return to “**normalcy**.” Businesses are back up and running (commerce); people are back in their homes.
 - **Infrastructure** and **basic services** (water, power, etc.) are back in place.
 - Access to **resources**.
- They also said that successful recoveries:
 - Depend on **well-trained field staff** and **cooperation** and **communication** between all partners and stakeholders.
 - Benefit from **previously (pre-disaster) established connections** with people likely to be involved in recovery and likely stakeholder groups.

Q2: Are there clear phases in the disaster recovery process that are useful milestones?

- Participants identified the following as significant **recovery milestones**:
 - Point at which **volunteers take over** (e.g., USACE can be relieved).
 - Availability of **transportation for first responders**.
 - **Restoration of basic services** followed by **restoration of full services**.
 - **Debris removal** is complete.
 - The community is **fully functioning** and is resilient.
 - Temporary housing has been removed, **citizens are back in permanent housing** and displaced residents have been “re-housed.”
 - **Transportation** has been restored.
 - **Public healthcare agencies** and **local healthcare providers** have returned; healthcare services have been restored.

- **Schools** are re-opened. Participants feel the reopening of schools is critical to recovery and a major milestone.
- **Other public buildings** are back up.
- Participants identified the following **recovery phases**:
 - **Evacuation** phase (particularly noting two state's experiences).
 - Damage **assessment** phase. Participants expressed the need for quicker assessments especially noting public housing.
 - Recovery **planning** phase.
 - "Push phase."
- They also said identifying and articulating recovery phases can be helpful to **benchmarking recovery progress**. Recovery progress can be measured by evaluating progress against clearly defined recovery phases. As one participant noted, the community can "see where we are."
- Participants said recovery leadership needs to **consider the impact of extending deadlines** on families. When deadlines are extended at the last minute, it hinders the transition of families to permanent housing.
- While not specific to defining recovery phases and milestones, participants also noted:
 - "Right sizing" the recovery effort is important achieving efficient recoveries.
 - Pairing a functioning housing authority (one that has not been damaged) to work with the housing authority that has been damaged will benefit the delivery of housing services and expedite recovery.

Q3: What features of Federal disaster recovery assistance are most important to you?

- Region IV VTC participants noted: **shelters; temporary housing; funding for recovery initiatives and projects; healthcare, medical and human services;** and the availability of **public housing** as important features of recovery assistance.
- With regard to the provision of healthcare, participants also said that the **coordination** with local agencies and providers is important them.
- And, participants noted that **training** is needed to teach citizens how to locate public housing.

Q4: How would you measure progress and what specific metrics should be considered for a successful disaster recovery?

- Region IV participants said the answer to measuring progress and defining metrics depends, in part, on where the community or individual "sits" (at what stage they are) within the disaster recovery process **is likely to make measures of progress different**.
- Participants also noted that **different perspectives**, groups or stakeholders are likely to have different ways they feel are appropriate and meaningful to measure progress. The local area, recovery resource providers, State and Federal agencies, and others, have **different objectives** and different definitions of State and community success.

- One participant noted that progress can be measured in terms of ability to **get people “back into the community” by transitioning them out of shelters.** This participant expressed transition from shelters and back into the community puts people into a more “sustainable mode,” better equipped to consider and deal with long-term recovery issues.
- **Assistance is needed beyond sheltering** and participants echoed other VTC groups in calling for case management support for disaster-impacted individuals and families.
- Participants noted that the availability of a **“comprehensive array” of services** is a measure of progress. Participants also noted that **evaluations of services** needs to occur periodically to determine if services need to be continued.
- Region IV also said it important to acknowledge again: Each disaster is different.

Q5: What are best practices in managing recovery from disasters?

- Participants feel it is important to have a **State-level office coordinate** all agencies with recovery missions and recovery assets, especially for large-scale disasters. They noted Mississippi as an example.
- They also want to see a **regional coordination** effort. Noting that FEMA Region IV and VI work together now on preparedness efforts. Federal participants are attempting to work together and interface with a variety of agencies on the recovery piece but recognize that recovery is really focused at the State level.
- Participants noted the importance of having **capable leaders** that are willing to listen and also have command capabilities. Participants said one of the best practices to come out of the Mississippi experience with Hurricane Katrina is FEMA’s ability to creatively **“think outside of the box”** without which the Mississippi cottages concept would not have gone forward as an alternative to manufactured homes and/or FEMA “trailers.”
- This group liked the idea of a **recovery task force** to organize and manage recovery.
- **Having, maintaining** and ensuring that other recovery partners are **aware** of a recovery plan is important to this group. Staying “on” plan is necessary to avoid confusion among partner agencies and stakeholders, and this group believe is the most efficient way to move forward.
- Other participants feel an emphasis on **training** and **multi-tasking** are important and that training staff that can multi-task is essential for successful recoveries. Training is needed within existing staff, new staff and across program areas and stakeholders.
- One participant noted the importance of **exit strategies** for long-term recovery efforts and exit strategies should be defined within the *NDRF*.
- Veterans of previous disasters said that **remedial actions based on previous experiences** should be a best practice. Done regularly (participants recommend annually), they provide an important forum for discussing what went right and wrong to guide future policy development.

- Participants also wondered if **EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact)** costs are allowed in the recovery phase.

Q6: What are the appropriate State, local and Tribal roles in leading disaster recovery efforts?

- Participants expressed that **leadership is needed at all levels**:
 - The State and governor will have **broad-scale visions** for all events.
 - States have a responsibility to **manage resources** with FEMA and participants in this group feel that relationship works most of the time.
 - Mayors and local governing authorities (including county boards) and Tribal leadership are likely to have **views specific to the areas they represent** and must **lead recovery** for their communities.
 - Local leadership should **identify housing needs and housing availability, local leads, provide local information and demographics and form long-term recovery committees.**
 - All have key roles to help **achieve “grand” recovery vision.**
- Recovery leadership needs to **coordinate the delivery of resources** in the field and with stakeholders on the State level. They expressed that **identifying key players** in county is important to seamless identification of needs the delivery of recovery resources.
- One participant expressed the need for first responders and local governments to **reassure communities** that assistance will be coming and available to help them address recovery needs.
- Another said that **coordinators** are needed for long-term recovery and they should lead the effort.
- One participant said that Tribal authorities find **reporting requirements** and the coordination of “systems” a challenge.

Q7: How can the nonprofit and private sectors be better integrated into recovery?

- Participants began this discussion by recognizing the unique perspective of programs held by American Red Cross.
- Participants expressed:
 - The **more involved** nonprofits and the private sector are in communications and participation in training opportunities, learning players and expectations, the better the recovery effort will be.
 - Nonprofits and the private sector need **more exposure to recovery plans and processes** developed at the Federal level and working their way to the State level. They need to be **better integrated** in recovery planning and implementation efforts.

- One participant suggested using **interactive conferencing** to enhance connectivity and summits to ensure more frequent dialogue.
 - A best practice example was discussed: The great job one of the faith-based groups did in organizing faith-based groups (using breakfast meetings as a tool) and was “right on the spot” with coordinating efforts with other nonprofits.
 - Another participant noted they had a successful experience, from the volunteer perspective, with using a **Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL)** embedded in the Emergency Management group.
- One Volunteer Agency said that it has been working on building **stronger relationships with the faith-based and nonprofit communities** and local and State governments, and greater integration within recovery for the past three (3) years need. To ensure success, better communications and communications tools are needed. Examples given include getting alerts from GEMA; being on “the system” so “we can alert our partners” about recovery and resources needs without having to send email. Participants think they are “getting there” with regard to this issue, but they also believe it has been slow.
 - A best practices example noted was the **faith-based community** has played a significant role in coordinating a centralized system for work orders.
- On state’s Housing Authority and HUD have put together a **national effort and coalition with local industry groups and housing agencies**. The group is affectionately known as “F-troop” and mobilizes in case of disasters tapping into national resources to provide affected areas with supplies and volunteer manpower to help in its aftermath, including housing along the Gulf Coast. One participant suggested it was better coordinated with FEMA.
 - Later in recovery post-Katrina, on state coordinated a **nationwide call for volunteers** to rebuild and mitigate public housing units in their state; FEMA should consider “plugging in or coordinating with these groups or NEMA.
 - With regard to private sector participation in recovery, this group said it appears there is reluctance from FEMA to involve private interests. Participants thought this might be due to a **perceived or real conflict of interest**. Participants offered **using nonprofits groups or committees to represent the private sector**, as a possible solution, suggesting that business executives for national security could be a model. Overall, participants thought the partnership with the private sector was minimal and a disjointed effort, needing great focus and coordination.
 - South Carolina said they have an **extensive VOAD Structure for small events**. They also noted the importance of adequate funding in recovery.
 - Participants want to see:
 - More resources from Federal partners for pre-disaster recovery planning.
 - Better communication with States.
 - Creation of a shared information system.
 - Centralized faith-based assistance.

Q8: What are best practices for community recovery planning that incorporates public input?

- From the long-term recovery perspective, participants responded to this question by acknowledging **FEMA as an important source for recovery funding**, noting **CDBG supplemental grants** will come through in response to a disaster. Participants also noted **entitlement communities** can use CDBG (Community Development Block Grants) for disaster assistance and public involvement.
- Participants discussed **Lessons Learned from Katrina and 9/11**:
 - Local agencies use money coming through.
 - **Entitlement communities** need to have consolidated plans – mechanism can be used for other things.
- Participants also said that community recovery needs to be **planned at the very beginning**, include all recovery phases and noted the **importance of communication** in recovery and planning. They noted further that “good” communications requires planning. Participants want to see **transparency** in recovery decision-making between public officials and their communities.
- One participant noted that “we” (Federal family) worked hard in a recent disaster **to keep elected officials with a solid knowledge-base** of disaster issues, initiatives in progress, excepted next steps, challenges to success and strategies to address those challenges. A public Web site was used to monitor the status of payments was an example noted. Participants want to see **outreach to local elected officials** and believe keeping public officials knowledgeable “keeps governors from calling.” One participant noted a change in approach that is more proactive in involving **county and/or city managers** as well as elected officials, acknowledging their importance to successful recoveries.
- One participant noted that **Federal dollars benefit large sectors of the community**, especially those that assist with housing. However, it is harder to find resources for “non-prepared” disasters that don’t cross “thresholds” needed to *Disaster Declarations* or meet minimum requirements for assistance.
- Participants noted the role of United Way and as a **resource for connecting** needed preparedness, response and recovery information with the public. For example, UW has periodic conferences that deal with preparedness and coordination, involving 110 organizations to discuss how to prepare for a disaster and coordinate assistance. Participants suggested this group as a possible partner in outreach to the community through these different agencies.
- Participants expressed that one of the faith-based groups and VOAD also had **roles in “synchronizing”** conversations:
 - Through the State Recovery Task Force, feeding community information important to a successful recovery through the Task Force.
 - To discuss county participation with their priorities.
 - Supported with a call-center.

- 211 was also mentioned as possible partner to facilitate getting needed information to the public.
- One state's rebuilding initiative was noted as a best practices model for leveraging Federal dollars.
- ESF #14 Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR) was discussed acknowledging its role at the county level and as a channel for sharing information and soliciting community input.
- This group feels communications initiatives should occur "year-round" and not just during a disaster and have the involvement of all agencies. They feel it is important to have consistency and frequency of messaging from the Federal family of recovery resources to local governments.

Q9: How can Federal, State and local disaster planning and recovery processes and programs be best coordinated?

- Participants began this discussion by acknowledging the role of **planning and exercising** in coordination. They said that planning and exercising needs to incorporate **all recovery partners** (nonprofits, private sector, government officials at **all levels of authority** (Federal, State, Tribal and local) and other NGOs, MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organization) and COGs (Continuity of Government planning orgs) and be from the **"bottom up."** Planning needs to be **comprehensive** and for **all disasters**.
- Participants feel it is important to **"know stakeholders and bring everyone to the table,"** "get everyone, **including decision-makers in the room.**" They also noted the importance of **knowing geographic** areas and Federal and State **recovery resources** and programs.
- **Regional and multi-county planning**, coordinating data, plans and transportation programs with MPOs and COGs was also discussed.
- One participant said that **this VTC was one of the best first steps** in getting stakeholders together to listen to input, articulate concerns, identify needs and then incorporating them into a useable format.
- Another noted that "we (Federal and State authorities)" need to **invite and engage people** for comprehensive, all hazards planning year-round if we want to achieve national preparedness.
- Participants feel it is important to not lose sight of the fact that **"all disaster are ultimately local."** Recovery leadership must be careful there is **no loss of information** in the "hierarchy of communications" between local governments and FEMA as things get "translated through emergency management to the Governor's office."
- Participants said there needs to be two (2) levels of **coordination** to facilitate and expedite recovery: One at the **State level** and one at the **local level**. They noted success in the

Governor's office of one state taking the lead to pull together all State agencies that interface with Federal agencies to coordinate its response to Hurricane Katrina.

- Using the example of debris management, participants expressed that **Federal systems are "very" complex** and may be confusing to local governments and recovery stakeholders. For example, the availability of help is different if a road is a Federal highway versus a local.
- Participants feel **communications** is important to recovery. They suggest looking for ways to **simplify the flow information** as well as its content, noting that the local/State/FEMA relationship is **"not a one-size-fits-all."**

Q10: As disaster recovery is primarily a State and local leadership issue, what are best practices for the timing (including start and end) and form of Federal assistance and coordination?

- With regard to time, participants said:
 - Assistance and coordination needs to be **ongoing and year-round**.
 - The response phase needs to be sooner, within **72-hours of the event** and it needs to be **coordinated** to ensure efficient and effective assistance.
 - Resources need to be available **pre-event**, until end of response, throughout recovery and until grant close-out following end of the disaster.
 - From the State perspective, **rapidity of getting FEMA assistance turned on is vital** — once the request "gets up the line," aid needs to "turn on" quickly to get recovery processes started.
 - **Relationships** are important to successful recoveries and the foundation for those should occur pre-disaster to be most effective in expediting assistance.
- Looking at the response phase, one participant said communities should **plan on a 72-hour period of no assistance**.
- Expect volunteers to "pop up" throughout the early days of the event. The arrival of assistance needs to be **coordinated** and so people who "show up" at the EOC can help.

Q11: What are the greatest capacity challenges that local and State governments face in disaster recovery and what are the best practices for increasing that capacity?

- **Challenges** noted include:
 - **Staffing.** Staffing is a challenge on several fronts:
 - The lack of **reliable funding** to State agencies outside of the disaster period results in agencies not having personnel to turn to when they need to "ramp up and hit the ground." This is especially problematic when a State or area is **facing multiple disasters**.
 - Participants observed that **FEMA has limited staff** in some areas.
 - Further, the **retention and recruitment** of trained personnel is a challenge for States with already limited pre-disaster resources.

- **Awareness of eligibility for public assistance.** As an example, participants noted that housing authorities that are State chartered are eligible for public assistance but sometimes **don't know that they are.**
- **Transportation. Low-income families,** post-disaster, lacking transportation resulting in limited access to available housing, loss of access to job opportunities and more. Conversely, disaster communities are not always aware of resources that are available: vanpools, etc.
- **Housing.** Participants acknowledged FEMA programs that provide **temporary housing (mobile homes and other options)** but feel more is needed.
- **Overlapping social needs.** Participants noted in a recent disaster low-income grant recipients had a difficult time differentiating between disaster-related needs and other, ongoing social-service needs. Both are important but access to resources is different.
- **Solutions** suggested include:
 - Participants suggested **better coordination pre-disaster and outreach** and **education** to explain rules and eligibility requirements for individual public assistance.
 - Participants want to see **case management grants** considered in the *Framework*.
 - Provide more **transportation resources for low-income families** to ensure access to public housing, enter the workforce, etc. Build awareness of resources that currently exist. Participants think the nonprofit community has an important role it can play in assisting in building awareness of available aid including but not limited to transportation help.
 - Provide more capacity in existing recovery programs: **More staff. More funding. More transitional housing.** Etc.
 - Incorporate.
 - Business community.
 - Media.
 - ESF #18 (Note: Used by some states, but not in the National Response Framework or Annexes as this number - Emergency Support Function 18 – Donations Management and Volunteer Management).
 - Long-term recovery office.

Q 12: What are best practices for marshaling Federal assistance — both financial and professional support – to support State and local efforts to recover from a disaster, and how can we work together to better leverage existing Federal grant dollars?

- Qualify for loans?
- Meet to fill in spaces, find solutions.
- SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), WOB (Women Owned Businesses), Small Business Districts.
- 901 Housing Authority.
 - Flexibility in use of \$.
 - Transfer for needed repair.
- Outreach to HUD in Washington for flexibility.

- Applicability to FEMA.
 - Possible permanent, not year to year.
- Agreed-upon plan, follow through.
- Teams, PWs (project worksheets).
- Changes in personnel, forms, confusing interpretation of Stafford (PA programs).
- PA (Public Assistance) cost coding issues: clear, concise on both sides.
- Region IV participants responded to this questions using economic and housing **public assistance process examples** and offered **comments and suggestions on planning and assessments, training and Lessons Learned**.
 - **Economic.** SBA is designed to help homeowners and businesses. However, people are hesitant to access the system—they feel they cannot afford loans, carry the debt load or make repayment schedules because of business lost due to the disaster. Some States are taking the lead by bringing stakeholders together to see what dollars are out there and matching those dollars to local needs.
 - **Housing.** Participants noted the 901 provision that allows housing authorities to use Mississippi funds for other programs in their portfolios for emergency repairs. This resource helped a lot of housing agencies facilitate repairs after Hurricane Katrina. Participants want to see more accessibility of public housing agencies to HUD field offices and in Washington and want more **flexibility** between programs to meet disaster-specific needs. They also said that some flexible measures needed for disaster recovery should be “enacted on permanent basis.”
 - **Planning.** Region IV participants thinks an **agreed upon Federal and State plan** with clear division of **authority and responsibility** is an important tool to help achieve recovery.
 - **Assessments.** PDAs (Preliminary Damage Assessments) need to be clear as possible for accurate assessments. Participants said, “. . .getting right information is critical to be efficient.”
 - **Training.** Participants want to see **field training** for recovery teams at both the State and Federal levels, noting recently completed meetings with county directors to discuss challenges to accessing recovery aid: Different personnel having **different forms** and **differing interpretations** of FEMA policies were noted as examples. **Agreement is needed on administrative tasks** (so language used in the completion of required forms so not rejected) and to help facilitate getting approvals needed for Federal assistance.
 - **Lessons Learned.** Participants think it is helpful to see what **works in other States** post-disaster. They want to see a more universal “mechanism” to apply Lessons Learned to overall FEMA policy rather than case-by-case.

Q13: What unmet needs are common to most disasters that do not seem to be adequately addressed under the current systems and programs?

Region IV identified the following unmet needs:

- **Help for “non-conventional” farmers.** Participants said that in large disaster aid for non-conventional farming “fell through the cracks.” Local authorities struggled to find money to help these farmers in recovery.
- **Help for migrant workers.** One participant noted that elderly people who live in rural areas are eligible for grants through USDA for disaster repair. But that same resource is not

available for non-elderly or migrant farmers (in some states). Participants want to see help for communities to replace disaster-destroyed migrant farmers' housing with acceptable and affordable housing.

- **Project Worksheets slow to be process.** Participants said PWs (Project Worksheets) were “**held to the end**” making it difficult to get recovery going. They also noted that it was hard for local authorities to go back to communities and say funding was not going to be as much as expected. Participants feel there needs to be away to work through this earlier, to know quickly if funding is not going to be forthcoming so the **appeal process** can start sooner. They also want to see **quicker decision-making**.
- **Insurance.** Region IV noted:
 - The **time gap** between insurance payments and FEMA assistance as delaying recovery.
 - Late in the game reimbursements.
 - Under-insured properties.
- **Economic assistance.** Although loans available through SBA and others, some businesses don't qualify and funding is limited. Participants noted that SBA is currently implementing a project in partnership with a national association, touring local cities (41), informing county governments of available Federal programs and how to access them.
- **Vulnerable populations.**
 - Participants expressed that **low-income individuals** and **families** need assistance with employment along with other recovery needs.
 - Low-income families and individuals along with other vulnerable populations are not “at the table” when disaster strikes. Region IV participants think all vulnerable populations need to be included at the **recovery- “planning table.”**
 - Participants want **more discussions** with FEMA and HUD to address social service issues.
- **Social service support.** Participants noted several examples:
 - **Affordable housing** is an issue with some times insurmountable barriers for low-income populations. Where landlords require security deposit, low-income families can't always come up with it.
 - Fair market rent situation can be an issue in local communities. FEMA can extend or exceed fair market rents by 150 percent whereas housing authority can only go up to 120 percent. Post-disaster rents become higher than pre-disaster. One participant said his/her area is “just now seeing reduction of rents to pre-disaster levels.” Participants want to see **FEMA hold rent to fair market rent to mirror HUD policy.**
 - Our communities, State and Federal authorities still tend to operate regular social service programs **without embedding disaster assistance** into them.
 - Disaster-impacted individuals and families need help **with utilities and other costs.** Funding needs to be in place to address those needs.
 - Participants noted there are “issues” with families moving from temporary housing units into housing choice voucher programs. They site this as an example of moving from disaster into regular programs.
- **Gap between what needs to do and doing it.** Participants noted especially:
 - Pre-disaster **mitigation** needed strengthen houses in advance of disasters.
 - “Marrying” **everyday activities and programs** with disaster planning – identifying what should be put in place “**right now**” to better prepare for future disasters.
 - Participants want to see a “**cash reserve**” account within individual assistance programs to cover emergencies.

- **Signage.** While not a recovery priority and more of a response initiative, participants feel evacuation signage is **confusing**.
- **IA (Individual Assistance) case management.** Families need budget assistance and assistance on how to manage money. Disaster-impacted families have an even greater need for help. “If poor,” they sometimes feel overwhelmed by thousands of dollars. They also do not know how to manage way through “process.” Participants want **more resources** for case management support.
- **Training.** Recipient of services and service providers need a **better understanding of recovery “system”** and the system needs to operate “” within constraints (statutory and other authorities).
- **Accountability and oversight.** Participants noted that in recent disasters public assistance agencies where FEMA wanted to **collect on contracts** after money to FEMA had already been dispersed years after disaster. The problem is exacerbated by multiple PACs (Public Assistance Coordinator) over time. Coming back years later to “tidy up” is confusing and difficult. Financial and professional support is needed.
- **OFA (Other Federal Agency) staffing.** Federal agencies do not get extra funding to provide staffing (in field, technical assistance) in response to a disaster. There is **no “backfill”** for this expenditure.
- **Federal/State relationships.** One participant said the “primary customer” is FEMA so State’s need to be as hospitable as possible especially with State agencies to help with preparedness.
- **Outreach.** Using USACE and others as examples, participants noted that educating locals on what is available — and what is not — to aid and assist recovery is important to the process. More outreach is needed. **More funding** is needed to support outreach.
- **Other assistance.** That may be unobligated in PA.
- **Mitigation.** Participants noted a gap between **pre-disaster** and **post-disaster operations** via PDM (Pre-Disaster Mitigation) and Stafford Act Section 406 mitigation and the writing of project worksheets. They suggest more aggressive marketing of 406 mitigation process and want to see 406 become a critical piece to the recovery process.
- **Undeclared events.** Participants noted examples of communities hit by a disaster not resulting in an **IA (Individual Assistance) designation** still not recovered, having high unemployment and low wages.
- **More immediate resources to local agencies.** One participant used the example of temporary roofing to illustrate the need local agencies have of recovery resources. Fuel was noted as a response and recovery need.

Q 14: What are best practices for integrating economic and environmental sustainability into recovery?

- Region IV participants want to see:
 - Local and Tribal consider looking at **life-sustaining natural resources** and protect public health and safety when making recovery decisions.
 - Recovery and political leadership:
 - Examine **petroleum** and **other contaminants** in floodwaters and their affects on farming, fisheries closures etc.
 - When considering comprehensive planning, zoning and land use regulations, look at the **challenges of environmental sustainability**.
 - Make planning an **ongoing activity** — throughout the year and beyond.

- Consider the social and built environment and the impacts of rebuilding on **quality of life** and **protecting historic structures**. Participants noted the Florida best practice of **inventorying** and **ranking structures** so that they can mitigate important buildings in advance of a disaster. Archiving critical records need to be considered and advance work should be done to protect these.
- Secure **private sector** participation up front. Understand their needs. For example, companies reopening after a disaster need staff. Staff need housing. Further, perhaps local universities and colleges can partner to train people for the new jobs.
- **Greening** and **energy efficiency** needs in the *NDRF*.
- Network with other Federal and local agencies as well as nonprofits. **Set up 501(c)(3)s** post-disaster to ensure donations to help address environmental sustainability issues in recovery.
- **Planning efforts** need to address all hazards, all scales of disasters.
- Balance the needs of the **individual** with the **community**.
 - When building back affordable housing, encourage people to build back using **fortified construction methods**. Provide them “know how” information and explain insurance energy efficiencies savings.

Q15: What are best practices for integrating mitigation and resilience into recovery?

When responding to this question, Region IV participants said:

- **Planning** is important to successful recoveries. They want to see:
 - Enhanced mitigation plans.
 - Disaster-specific plans.
 - Planning partnerships between local authorities and regional planning districts.
- **ESF #14 Long-Term Community Recovery (LTCR)** needs to be stood up early, involved from the beginning and out in the field quickly. Short-term decisions have long-term consequences. ESF #14 LTCR provides technical assistance and SMEs to support long-term recovery planning with a mitigation and resilience focus.
- HAZUS and other GIS (geospatial information system) **predictive technologies** need to be enhanced and **shared** with our local and State partners.
- Using the USACE (US Army Corps of Engineers) Silver Jacket organizations as an example, **partnerships with nonprofits** and other recovery providers is important to leveraging and getting needed resources to communities.
- Consider the creation of State regional planning districts, noting that these have worked well in other States and has been good in **floodplain management**.
- One state would like to see pre-disaster planning done for post-disaster rebuilding that incorporates GIS and **risk assessment**.
- Identify and **map critical structures, pre-disaster**.
- State and local communities need “**good**” **State Hazard Mitigation plans** – especially enhanced plans.
- Build **strong partnerships between FEMA mitigation** and State and local recovery authorities. Sometimes mitigation is pushed to the side in the interest of quick recovery but they are important in that recovery process. One state is getting **more applications than can be funded**, but the partnership between FEMA mitigation and the state mitigation staff

has played a crucial role in **building resiliency** within the State. Best practices projects that have come for Hazard Mitigation (HM) grants include:

- Know there are five (5) HM grant programs. Use them.
 - **406 assistance** needs to be better utilized.
 - The construction of small **safe rooms** along evacuation routes in MS and a number of other mitigation projects that are helping to make the State more resilient. SC has included mitigation in their initial damage assessment so FEMA sends a **mitigation person every time a PDA (preliminary damage assessment) is being done**. Recovery staff are instructed to **look for losses that could have been avoided**.
 - Collect and share mitigation **success stories**.
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- While more response related than recovery, participants also suggested:
 - **Creating shelters** along evacuation routes.
 - Secure funding for schools to serve as shelters.
 - Build safe rooms at **police stations** and **firehouses**.

Q16. What else would you like us to know?

- USACE (US Army Corps of Engineers) has modeling programs and more and people should utilize those rather than “reinventing the wheel.”